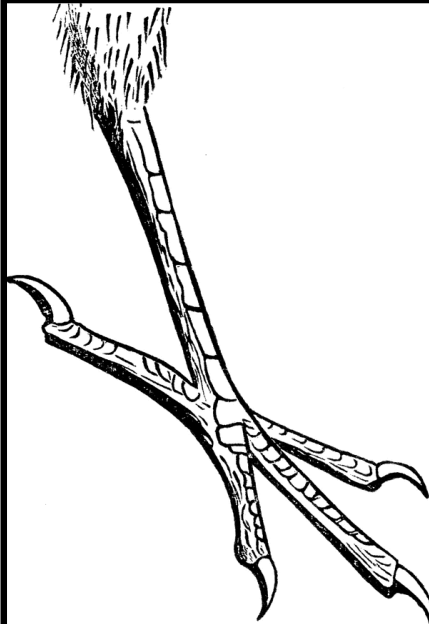


## Red –winged Blackbirds



Red-winged blackbirds eat primarily seeds and insects. They generally breed near water, particularly liking both fresh and salt water marshes with cattails. Red-winged blackbirds are passerines that belong to the order of Passeriformes which includes almost half of all birds.

Female build their nest by weaving wet vegetation around the stems of water plants such as cattails and then creating a bowl from dry grass.



Passerines are perching birds. They all share the same foot structure with four toes, three facing front and one facing back to grasp a perch. Most, but not all, songbirds are passerines.



Like many other bird species, the female red-winged blackbird lacks the colorful plumage of their mate. It is common for female birds to have drab plumages with lots of mixed browns and whites. This camouflage allows them to blend in with the colors of their nests and the surrounding vegetation. This helps hide them from predators while nesting. Red-winged blackbirds lay from 2 to 4 eggs per brood and up to two broods in a year.

## One of America's Most Common Birds



Dunrovin Ranch (red star on the map) is right along the border between where red-winged blackbird occur year round (green area on the map) and where they are limited to their summer breeding season (yellow area on the map). This means that Dunrovin sees them occasionally during the winter months, but sees large flocks of them during the summer. The local red-winged blackbird population grows as winter breaks, and spring arrives. Noticing groups of noisy red-winged blackbirds is always a good that sign that winter is beginning to loose its grip on the land.

Even during late winter snow storms, we at Dunrovin know that spring is on its way when we see flocks of red-winged blackbird fighting for a spot to land on the sunflower feeder and picking up dropped seeds from the ground.

If you keep Dunrovin's Bench Webcam on all day in the background, you will likely spend much of the day listening to their distinctive, and loud trills.

The blackbirds often displace many of the smaller birds that also frequent the bench birdfeeders such as sparrows and finches. The magpies always barge in at the feeders regardless of other birds' presence.

